

The Space Between Us

The Space Between Us brings the connection between geography, psychology, and politics to life. By going into the neighborhoods of real cities, Enos shows how our perceptions of racial, ethnic, and religious groups are intuitively shaped by where these groups live and interact daily. Through the lens of numerous examples across the globe and drawing on a compelling combination of research techniques including field and laboratory experiments, big data analysis, and small-scale interactions, this timely book provides a new understanding of how geography shapes politics and how members of groups think about each other. Enos' analysis is punctuated with personal accounts from the field. His rigorous research unfolds in accessible writing that will appeal to specialists and non-specialists alike, illuminating the profound effects of social geography on how we relate to, think about, and politically interact across groups in the fabric of our daily lives.

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The Space Between Us
Social Geography and Politics

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In memory of Zim.

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>Preface</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiv
1 The Red Line	I
2 The Demagogue of Space	34
3 The Demagogue's Mechanism: Groups, Space, and the Mind	51
4 Laboratories: Assigning Space	79
5 Boston: Trains, Immigrants, and the Arizona Question	108
6 Chicago: Projects and a Shock to Social Geography	142
7 Jerusalem: Walls and the Problem of Cooperation	171
8 Crenshaw Boulevard, Los Angeles: Contact and Exit	197
9 Phoenix: The Arc of Intergroup Interactions and the Political Future	227
<i>Notes</i>	250
<i>Bibliography</i>	276
<i>Index</i>	293

Appendices and replication material for this book are deposited in the Harvard Dataverse (<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/>).

Figures

1.1	Chicago, percent Black, 2014	<i>page</i> 10
1.2	Counterfactual distribution of Black population in Chicago, 2014	11
1.3	Four types of space	14
1.4	Black/white segregation in the United States in 2010	23
1.5	Hispanic/white segregation in the United States in 2010	24
1.6	Groups with varying segregation, size, and proximity	26
1.7	A plane of context: The effects of interpersonal contact and social geography on group-based bias	30
2.1	Racially charged Google searches by segregation and Black proportion	38
3.1	Female	56
3.2	African American female	58
3.3	Caucasian female	60
3.4	Perceptual distance on a political dimension with voters and parties (top) and voters and social groups (bottom)	73
4.1	Boston subjects' perceptions of the location of Blacks in Cambridge	84
4.2	Measuring "maps in our heads"	86
4.3	Correctly locating groups in space	87
4.4	Finding the "point of subject equality" between white and Black	89
4.5	Measuring the effect of segregation with lines	96
4.6	Measuring the effect of segregation with colored squares	98
4.7	Measuring the effect of segregation on ambiguous faces	100

<i>List of Figures</i>	ix
4.8 The “neighborhood” we created in a laboratory	103
5.1 Effects of the trains experiment, by length of contact	125
5.2 Boston and neighboring communities, percent Hispanic, 2014	132
5.3 Counterfactual distribution of Hispanic population in Boston and neighboring communities, 2014	134
5.4 Boston’s racial division and racial crimes, drawn by former police officer	136
5.5 Boston, percent Black, 1970	137
5.6 County change in percent Hispanic, 2000–2014, and Trump vote shift	140
6.1 Central Chicago, housing projects, and Black population, 2000	148
6.2 Central Chicago, housing projects, and Black population, 2014	149
6.3 Changes in voter turnout after the housing projects were demolished	152
7.1 Ultra-Orthodox political poster, Bet Shemesh, Israel, 2013	178
7.2 Locations studied with the lab in the field in Israel	184
7.3 Playing a public goods game with a secular versus an ultra-Orthodox player	185
7.4 Social geography and sharing in Israel	188
7.5 Designing a neighborhood	192
8.1 Black and Hispanic voters in the Los Angeles Basin, 2008	198
8.2 Simulation of a dynamic model of segregation	200
8.3 Maps of Crenshaw, drawn by two residents	210
8.4 Black and Latino voters of central Los Angeles, 2008	213
8.5 Black and Hispanic residents of a section of Inglewood, 2008	217
8.6 Proximity of Latinos to Blacks in Los Angeles and probability of voting for Obama in 2008	219
8.7 Letter sent to voters in Los Angeles	221
9.1 Central Nogales, Arizona, near the border	228
9.2 Arizona and the Gadsden Purchase, percent Hispanic, 2014	235
NI.1 Two dimensions of segregation: clustering and isolation	252

Preface

The scenes that illustrate this book are all about us. For illustrations, please look closely at real cities. While you are looking, you might as well also listen, linger and think about what you see.

– Jane Jacobs¹

Among the reasons that the scientific study of society is both difficult and exciting is that society never stops changing.

This book is about what happens when different groups of people live close together – sharing small towns, large cities, states, and countries – yet remain separated in geographic space and, as a result, separated in psychological, social, and political space as well. In ways that have not previously been made clear, this property of being close, yet far, penetrates our psychology and affects our thoughts, behaviors, and collective well-being. It paradoxically repels us from the groups to which we are already close. These repelling forces have shaped behavior, as far as scholars can tell, for all of human history. Yet increasingly, especially in the West, people from different groups that were once widely separated are moving into closer and closer contact, changing the context in which many of us live. This makes those repelling forces more important.

Moreover, these forces influence our democratic institutions. They affect whom we vote for and whether we will share our resources with groups other than our own. Recent events remind us of why this is important.

I finished this book on October 20, 2016. On November 8, Donald Trump was elected President. Although not my primary focus, in revising the manuscript for publication, I added analysis showing that Trump's election appears to have been aided by the very prejudices I explore in this book. My contention in this book is that people living in certain places were affected, probably much more than they realize, by specific aspects of the

social geography in which they live. That is, their attitudes and behaviors (such as voting for Trump versus voting for Hillary Clinton) were affected by the size of another group (in this case, Latinos), by the nearness of that group to where they themselves live, and by the extent to which the two groups live in segregation. Thus, in areas where the Latino population had recently grown, previously Democratic non-Latino voters shifted their support to Trump, a candidate who centered his campaign around anti-immigrant demagoguery.

Time and reflection will tell how significant Trump's election was in the course of American history, but there is little doubt that it is significant to many people now. Partisan and ideological concerns aside, the millions of people demonstrating in the streets indicate that people feel that something important is going on. As a social scientist, I too have a sense that we are in a potentially consequential moment. Trump's rise and the success of populist politicians in Europe are a testament to the continued relevance of the ancient prejudices I explore. His election also reminds us that the tentacles of these prejudices extend beyond the domains in which they have an immediate effect. Propelled into office partly by voters' distaste for immigrants, Trump is now attempting to change America's course on healthcare, climate policy, defense, trade, and taxes. Some of these changes, if implemented, will ripple across the globe.

In this book, I try to show the continuity of the influence of social geography across time and space, so that we can understand why the cases of African Americans in Chicago and ultra-Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem have so much to tell us about why Latino immigration seemed to have such sway over Anglo voters in Pennsylvania and other Rust Belt states in 2016; or why Arab and African immigration to Europe is affecting voters there.

The influence of social geography can also be seen, I believe, in how the increasing geographic divide between Democrats and Republicans is widening the already yawning partisan gulf in social and political preferences; this, too, was reflected in the last election. In Chapter 1, I will ask you to consider how attitudes and behaviors of Chicago residents would be different if all the same people lived in Chicago but the South Side were not almost entirely Black and the North Side white. Extending this thinking, I believe, helps us to answer what our behavior would be like if Massachusetts were not blue and Oklahoma were not red. I think it can help to answer why "us versus them" seems increasingly to coincide with "here versus there."

To me, these connections are obvious, but I've spent a lot of time with the evidence. My hope is that by laying out that evidence to others, such connections will enter the conversation as we continue to deal with the wonderful complexities of diversity in a democracy. As data become available, we can look at the trends from 2016 and other recent elections and test, update, and modify the understanding I have offered in this book. So far, some of my findings seem to hold up quite well and seem to help us understand what is

Preface

xiii

currently going on. Most likely, others will eventually have to be reexamined. But that is the nature of the scientific investigation of the social world. The world keeps turning and the lives of the people in it keep churning and it is beautifully complicated to study.

Cambridge, Massachusetts
February 2017

Acknowledgments

The seeds of this book were in the dissertation I completed at UCLA in 2010.¹ Of course, as is normal with science, much of the theory and evidence has been updated, revised, or discarded since then.

It took me a long time to get to the point of filing that paper dissertation at Young Library on a, as always, beautiful spring day in Los Angeles. It took me an even longer time to get to the point of putting the final touches on this book on a cold winter day in Cambridge. I never would have been in a position to do either without many people and it is my sincere hope that they understand how much I appreciate them, even if I cannot adequately express it.

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Acknowledgments

xv

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In October 2004, I met a girl at Liquid Kitty on Pico Boulevard in West Los Angeles. In May 2010, from Boston, she was doing rush corrections on my dissertation as I prepared to submit it. In 2017, I have a family and have been unbelievably fortunate. I no longer need her to proof-read my writing, but that girl at Liquid Kitty made it all possible and continues to make it all possible – and wonderful.